

Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 

Australian Volunteers Program Samoa

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Samoa to achieve their development goals since 1972. The Australian Government's Australian Volunteers Program continues this rich history.

The Australian Volunteers Program develops long-term, mutually respectful partnerships with organisations across the Pacific, Asia, and Africa to contribute to locally led change and the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The program aims to:

- Support partner organisations to progress their development objectives
- Increase program participants' cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries
- Increase key stakeholders' appreciation of the value of volunteering

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Krystelle Syme is a volunteer Emergency Medical Services Advisor at the Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority, pictured with colleagues Malo Tagiilima, Tali Mikaele, and Viliamu Vili at Apia Fire Station. Photo: Darren James

1

Australian volunteer Structural Engineer Matthew Whitwell with Engineer Joseph Faamatuainu inspecting for adherence to correct building standards on a new construction in Apia. Photo: Darren James

2

Volunteer Audiologist Haylene Goh testing the hearing of Ionne Tuuilalo at SENESE, near Apia. Photo: Darren James

Our work in Samoa

Our team in Samoa works closely with our partners to understand their priorities and objectives. Together with our partners, we identify how the program can support them and how that support might change over time.

The program provides support across a range of development priorities in Samoa, including:

- Economic growth
- Health and education
- Governance
- Private sector development
- Gender equality
- Disability inclusion
- Climate change
- Disaster management

In Samoa, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including health, and civil society and government. Program partners are mainly government agencies and local or national NGOs.

Most volunteer assignments are with partners in Motootua and Apia. The program also supports partners through remote volunteer assignments.

The program facilitates opportunities for partners to connect with each other, exchange knowledge and share experiences. For example, partners participate in online and face-to-face workshops that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

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It has been a wonderful journey working with our Epidemiologist for Climate Change and Health volunteer. The volunteer has supported the Climate Change and Health Unit in responding to adverse effects of climate change on health, a key government priority on health. Learning together, creating an enabling environment in the office and sharing experiences during field work have contributed tremendously to achieving the objectives of the assignment.”

Victoria Jeremia-Faasili, Principal Climate Change and Health - National Health Surveillance & IHR Division



Since 2018
the program
in Samoa has
supported

25+
partner
organisations

50+
Australian
volunteers

70+
volunteer
assignments

9
small
grants

Small grants

From time to time, our partners can apply for small grants to support their vital work and progress towards achieving their development objectives.

Small grants have supported over 200 partners to deliver hundreds of projects across the program. Projects have been across a range of thematic areas including gender equality, disability and social inclusion, climate action and organisational strengthening.

Australian organisations

We also partner with Australian organisations who share our commitment to locally led change. We support existing partnerships between overseas partners and Australian organisations and identify opportunities for new partnerships. Australian partners contribute to skills and knowledge exchange and support volunteer recruitment.

3

Team members Serafina Grace Pua (L), volunteer Marketing Mentor Angela Coombes (C), and Sierravista Peaario Faailo (R), at the National Bank of Samoa. Photo: Darren James



“The Australian Volunteers program is a good opportunity for both the volunteers and partner organisations to share ideas and learn from each other, as well as bridging the human resource capacity gap.”

Ane Moananu, Country Program Manager - Australian Volunteers Program, Samoa

About our volunteers

Our program is all about people – volunteers, partners and the communities in which they live and work.

We value volunteers who are open to mutual learning and skills exchange, and who are committed to contributing to partners' priorities in support of locally led change.

We are committed to ensuring that international volunteering is inclusive and accessible to Australians from a range of backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, identities and abilities. We recognise the

unique strengths and skills that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences offer, and we work with volunteers to remove barriers they may face.

Each volunteer assignment requires specific skills and experience. Australian volunteers work in a broad range of sectors including community and social development, health, science, engineering and architecture, skilled trades, education, disaster and emergency management, gender equality and child protection.

4

Kamal Jayasinghe volunteers as a Civil Engineer at the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure. Pictured with Civil Engineer Faletao Polutea. Photo: Darren James

5

Australian volunteer Shannon Whitwell preparing literacy programs with May Ah San at the Samoa Stationery and Bookstore library, Apia. Photo: Darren James



In-country

In-country volunteering enables volunteers and partners to share their skills, knowledge and culture, and form long-lasting relationships along the way.



Remote

Through remote volunteering Australians are supporting organisations overseas to achieve their development goals anywhere, anytime.



Hybrid

By combining remote and in-country phases, hybrid volunteering offers our partners and volunteers flexibility while still allowing for genuine connections and meaningful skill sharing.

Spotlight on Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health (MOH), a program partner since 2018, has a focus on community empowerment and strengthening primary health care.

The MOH is responsible for health sector planning, policy development, preventive, curative and palliative health care delivery, public health promotion programs, disease surveillance and public health emergency management. The direction of MOH's work is guided by its legal mandates, derived from its health legislation. Activities are implemented through the national plan, which are aligned to the current Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2019/20-2029/30.

One of the main long-term outcomes of the Health Sector Plan 2019/20-2029/30 is Improved Risk Management and Responses to Climate Change, Disasters and Public Health Emergencies. There is growing evidence that extreme weather events lead to increases in infectious diseases amongst affected communities. Through its Climate Change & Health Unit, MOH has now strengthened its collaboration with the Meteorology Division to collate and monitor climate health to better inform decision making and early detection of disease outbreaks.

Australian volunteer Jennifer Rodger completed a remote volunteering assignment during the pandemic as an Epidemiologist. During her assignment, Jennifer assisted the MOH's Climate Change & Health Unit in reviewing and finalising the Climate Adaptation Strategy for Health. She also supported staff in conducting climate change and health research using appropriate design methods to assess the relationship between disease patterns and weather patterns in Samoa.

With Jennifer's support, team members' networking capacity and research skills have developed significantly. Jennifer also built close working relationships and demonstrated passion and commitment throughout her assignment.



The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by principles that ensure we



Support locally led change



Grow strong relationships and partnerships



Value volunteering



Evolve good practice and embrace innovation



Enhance diversity and inclusion



Ensure accountability and value learning

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